



Eddie A. Perez
Mayor

COURANT SILENT ON COMMUNITY'S CALL FOR WEBSITE REFORMS
WHITE POWER WEBSITES VOICE SUPPORT FOR COURANT

---NEWS RELEASE---

(June 26, 2008)--- The Tribune Company and The Hartford Courant have refused to take action on community requests to take responsible reforms to its website Courant.com. This lack of action comes six days after community leaders gathered on the steps of the Hartford Courant voicing their concern about needed action to prevent racist comments and hate speech from being posted.

A letter was sent on June 20th to Courant Publisher Stephen Carver. It was signed by several community leaders including Scot X. Esdaile of the CT NAACP, State Rep. Kelvin Roldan, Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the CT Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, State Rep. Ken Green, State Sen. John Fonfara, Glenn A. Cassis, Executive Director of the African-American Affairs Commission, Anne Stanback, Executive Director Love Makes a Family, Democratic Registrar of Voters Shirley Surgeon, Sabrina Flintroy of Single Mothers on the Move and City Council members rJo Winch, Veronica Airey-Wilson, Pedro Segarra, Luis Cotto, and Larry Deutsch. The community asked the Courant to apply a number of best practices to its website to prevent racist and hate speech from dominating the paper's on-line forum. The Courant was specifically asked to:

1. Publicly take responsibility for the racist and hateful comments it has published on Courant.com
2. Require those who post comments to register first
3. Hire a community monitor to guarantee Courant.com does not become a regular venue for hate speech
4. Retain a citizen advisory group to monitor and advise the Courant on how to reduce hate speech

In a related development, a number of racist and anti-Semitic websites have prominently highlighted the Hartford Courant's position against adopting controls on its website and have asked readers to e-mail Mayor Perez to express their displeasure at this request for website reform at the Courant. Among the sites highlighting the Courant position are newsnet14.com, "a resource for people of European descent around the world" and whitereferenceblogspot.com, a website covering "issues of interest to the white nationalist community."

"It is disappointing that the Courant and Tribune Company have not responded in some substantial way to the reasonable requests of the community to implement reforms to prevent racist and hate speech from dominating the reader forums at the Courant.com. It is clear that those who want to divide the community continue to feel comfortable on the Courant's website. The Mayor looks forward to the Courant adopting reforms that address the community's concerns," said Sarah Barr, spokeswoman for the Mayor.